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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 004661

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE TO NICARAGUAN MANPADS DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 100646

[1](#)B. 06/23/05 SCHARLING-DESK E-MAIL

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloffs delivered demarche (ref A) June 20 to MFA desk officer for small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) Jean-Francois Guillaume and July 1 to MFA DAS-equivalent for Central America and the Caribbean Gilles Bienvenu. Guillaume indicated that the GOF is focused on the destruction of arms in Africa, making it unlikely that France has the resources to help with the destruction of MANPADS in Nicaragua if needed in the future. Bienvenu responded that the GOF shared our concerns on the potential risks that MANPADS posed. He believed that the GOF would be willing to relay these concerns to EU members in Managua and in Brussels at the next COLAT meeting and suggested that Germany, as president of the EU group in Managua, should deliver a demarche to the GON and appropriate National Assembly members on behalf of the EU. However, Bienvenu cautioned that, as a sovereign state, Nicaragua had a right to self-defense. As a result, he thought any demarche would push for reduction rather than outright destruction of all MANPADS stocks.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Bienvenu responded to a question on French support for the Sandinistas by noting that, while they had enjoyed the sympathy of the French left during the 1980's, he did not believe there were currently many ties. He was not aware of any group presently supporting them, did not know of any French Parliamentary motions of support, and indicated there was not a Sandinista lobby present in France. As anecdotal evidence, Bienvenu offered that last year the MFA had trouble finding participants interested in Nicaragua to attend a breakfast for the outgoing Ambassador.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: In response to ref B, Post welcomes additional talking points for use as appropriate, but does not believe a more extensive PD campaign would be productive. Nicaragua seems below the radar of most in France, and drawing attention to the situation risks generating reactive support for the Sandinistas. End Comment.  
STAPLETON